

June 13, 2017

The Hon. Ryan Zinke
Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20240

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

MORONGO
BAND OF
MISSION
INDIANS



A SOVEREIGN NATION

Dear Secretary Zinke:

On behalf of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, I am writing concerning the letter of May 16, 2017 from Mike Black, Acting Assistant Secretary- Indian Affairs regarding reorganization of the Department of the Interior. Respectfully, I ask that the Department include at least one additional session to be held in California, home to roughly 20 percent of all tribal nations in our country.

To date, I have seen no reports from Indian Country regarding any of five already held sessions. I am concerned Indian Country does not fully understand the implications of this process. A reorganization could diminish the trust relationship tribes currently enjoy with the Federal government—this outcome would be wholly unacceptable.

I am also concerned that the Department would only provide tribal governments with a 9 days notice before beginning these consultations. Good faith, government-to-government consultations should begin with ample notification of at least 30 days so that tribal leaders and staff have sufficient time to process the incoming mail, assess the proposal and make travel arrangements.

Please know that the Morongo Tribe intends to submit formal comments prior to the close of the comment period in July. In the mean time, however, I ask that you and your staff conduct more thorough outreach to those that could be intimately impacted by this potentially significant executive action.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,


Robert Martin, Tribal Chairman

Cc: Michael Black, Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs